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CONSEQUENCES OF THE EARLY EMPLOYMENT OF CHINESE NATIONALIST FORCES IN KOREA



NIE-12

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

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NIE-12

The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force participated in the preparation of this estimate, and State, Army, and Navy concur in it. A dissent by the intelligence organization of the Department of the Air Force is appended as an annex. This paper is based on information available on 23 December.

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CONSEQUENCES OF THE EARLY EMPLOYMENT OF CHINESE NATIONALIST FORCES IN KOREA

ASSUMPTION: That hostilities have not spread beyond the borders of Korea at the time of a decision to employ Chinese Nationalist forces in Korea.*

1. The Chinese Nationalists have offered a task-force of 33,000 troops for service in Korea and possibly could provide a greater number without jeopardizing the security of Taiwan. Nationalist troops have undergone extensive and prolonged training, but due to inept leadership and poor living conditions there is some question of their morale. The majority of Nationalist troops on Taiwan have come from the more temperate zones of China, and a contingent for Korea probably would require training and some re-equipment before being committed to combat in cold-weather operations. In other respects, the initial Nationalist contingent for Korea would be well-equipped and could be transported to Korea in fourteen days. The Nationalist troops are experienced and familiar with Chinese Communist tactics. Nationalist units should perform comparatively efficiently under good leadership and adequate supervision, but might be susceptible to Communist propaganda and suffer a substantial number of defections if permitted to operate independently in areas beyond the immediate tactical control of UN commanders.

2. The presence or the absence of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea in the limited numbers estimated to be available within the immediate future would not be a major factor affecting the ability of UN forces to establish

and hold a defensive line across the peninsula against numerically vastly superior Chinese Communist forces.

3. If a protracted defense of a beachhead is undertaken, the presence of Chinese Nationalist forces could make a substantial contribution, provided they were operating under good leadership and adequate supervision.

4. Whatever the military outcome in Korea, the employment of Chinese Nationalists there would, in the eyes of other nations, further identify the US with the Chinese Nationalists and would constitute a moral commitment for continuing US support of the Chinese Nationalist regime. In addition, the employment of Chinese Nationalist forces in Korea would immediately raise difficult problems involving the feasibility of continuing the US policy of neutralization of Taiwan, particularly with respect to the employment of Nationalist naval and air forces other than in Korea and in Korean waters.

5. A majority of UN nations would probably reject a US proposal to use Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea. There is a general apprehension that the employment of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea would give impetus or at least provide the pretext for increased militancy on the part of Communist China. This militancy would increase the danger of a general war with Communist China, which in turn might develop into a global war. In addition, the Western European nations would feel strongly that the US was jeopardizing the first-priority task of defense of the European continent by becoming involved in protracted hostilities in Asia. The employment of the Chinese Nationalists would alienate other Asiatic countries, which

*Note: This estimate considers only the consequences of the immediate employment of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea in the present situation and does not deal with the consequences of eventual employment of Chinese Nationalist troops either in Korea, in later and changed circumstances, or on the Chinese mainland as part of a larger undertaking. An estimate (NIE-10) is in preparation on the more general question.

consider the Chinese Nationalists to be reactionary, politically incompetent, and already repudiated by their own people. Unilateral US action in using Chinese Nationalist troops would intensify these feelings.

6. The use of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea would remove whatever chance might remain of a political solution of the Korean conflict. Although it is evident that Communist China strongly supports general Soviet strategic objectives, this support might

become even stronger as a result of the use of Chinese Nationalist forces in Korea.

7. The USSR would probably welcome a unilateral US decision to use Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea as: (a) further embroiling the US in hostilities with Communist China without engaging the USSR; (b) dividing the US from its allies; and (c) providing plausibility for international Communist propaganda concerning alleged US military aggressions and support of reactionary regimes.

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ANNEX

1. The Director of Intelligence, U.S.A.F., dissents in NIE-12.

2. In general, this estimate has emphasized the military and political disadvantages of the employment of Chinese Nationalist forces in Korea, and has failed to point out adequately the advantages which would accrue to the U.S.-U.N. campaign in Korea by the use of such forces. Specific points are as follows:

a. The discussions in this paper appear to have been governed by the acceptance of approximately 33,000 Nationalist troops as being essentially the total number available for employment in Korea. This office estimates this number to be far less than the total available.

b. The estimate does not give sufficient consideration to the fact that Chinese Nationalist Forces offer the only readily available force for major augmentation of U.N. forces in Korea. In fact, such insufficient consideration fails to give planners grounds for looking upon the availability of these forces as a factor influencing the determination as to whether or not a beachhead should be held at all.

c. Introduction of a large number of Chinese Nationalist troops could make a substantial contribution by providing much-needed infantry to the U.S.-U.N. campaign in Korea, if a beachhead were retained.

d. This office does not believe that the reactions of all the various Asiatic nations to the employment of Nationalist troops in Korea can be assessed with sufficient accuracy to warrant the conclusion that these Asiatic nations will be irrevocably opposed to the utilization of these anti-communist forces. In this respect, more deference is paid in this paper to the attitudes of the governments, or majorities in the respective countries, than to the elements which fully recognize the Communist menace and would be encouraged by

this new opposition to Communism's advance. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that even in Europe, public opinion might learn to applaud firm opposition, whether it be in Europe or in Asia, and in fact might prefer the fight to be made in Asia.

e. The estimate indicates that the use of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea would eliminate any remaining chance of an immediate political solution of the Korean conflict. This dissent in no way is intended to contradict this conclusion. However, it appears to this office that the law of diminishing returns has set in with respect to the probability of a satisfactory immediate political conclusion. The discussion in the paper does not warrant a sound conclusion as to whether or not utilization of Nationalist troops would prejudice or aid an eventual political solution.

3. The estimate implies that the employment of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea would give impetus to, or provide the pretext for, increased militancy on the part of Communist China. It is reasonable that any increase in militancy, if such is possible (other than against Hong Kong), would be governed more by Chinese military capabilities and their own time-table than by any provocation which might result from the employment of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea.

4. There appears to be insufficient data to justify the conclusion in paragraph 7 of this estimate that "the USSR would probably welcome a unilateral U.S. decision to use Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea."

5. This office would revise NIE-12 as indicated below:

a. Reference p. 1, par. 2. Revise as follows: "There is no immediate crisis in Korea requiring Chinese Nationalist troops to prevent a disaster, but this opportunity to begin the dynamic exploitation of any anti-Communist forces whose commitment could have a favor-

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able effect on the Korean and possibly the entire Far Eastern situation should be given careful consideration. The Chinese Nationalist forces on Formosa provide the only visible means for such exploitation. The ~~presence or~~ absence of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea ~~in the limited numbers estimated to be available~~ within the immediate near future and later would not be an important ~~a major~~ factor affecting the ability of UN forces to establish and hold a defensive line across the peninsula against numerically vastly superior Chinese Communist forces, unless the US-UN introduced reinforcements directly."

b. Reference p. 1, par. 3. Add at end of paragraph as follows: "An important requirement in Korea is for additional infantry. By using Nationalist infantry as a screening force, present UN forces in Korea could be used more effectively as a striking force. The defense of a beachhead requires a mobile reserve which can counterattack quickly at the points of greatest enemy pressure."

c. Reference par. 4. Amend first sentence and add a new sentence as follows: "Whatever the military outcome in Korea, the employment of Chinese Nationalists there would, in the eyes of certain other nations at the present time, further identify the US with the Chinese Nationalists and would constitute a degree of moral commitment for continuing US support of the Chinese Nationalist regime. At the same time this act would identify U.S. intentions to utilize anti-Communist forces within its capabilities, and as such might have a positive psychological effect of potentially great value upon anti-Communist forces."

d. Reference par. 5. Revise as follows: "At the present time a majority of UN nations would probably reject a US proposal to use Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea. There is a general apprehension that the employment of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea would give impetus, or at least provide the pretext, for increased militancy on the part of Communist China. Despite the repeated assurance of the US-UN to respect the Manchurian borders and the maintenance of the embargo against Chinese Nationalist operations on the mainland, Chinese Communist

militancy has already reached a high level in committing the Fourth Field Army, which represents the best available Chinese Communist military force. It is difficult to see any new form which this militancy could take (other than in Hong Kong). ~~This militancy would increase~~ Therefore, there probably would be little increase in the danger of a general war with Communist China, which danger ~~in turn might develop into a global war already exists~~. This, too, probably will have little direct effect upon the development of a global war. At least in the beginning, the Western European nations ~~would~~ might feel strongly that the US was jeopardizing the first-priority task of defense of the European continent by ~~becoming involved a continued involvement~~ in protracted hostilities in Asia. Later however, they might come to appreciate the determination of the US to take constructive action in an area of vital importance in the struggle against Soviet directed Communist aggression. The employment of the Chinese Nationalists ~~would~~ might alienate those element in certain other Asiatic countries, ~~which~~ who consider the Chinese Nationalists to be reactionary, politically incompetent, and already repudiated by their own people. On the other hand, the employment of the Chinese anti-Communist forces could hearten the anti-Communist elements of all Asiatic countries and increase their will to resist Communist aggression. ~~Unilateral US action in using Chinese Nationalist troops would intensify these feelings~~. In addition if the other nations should determine that it is necessary to make a stand in Korea, they will be more amenable when they recognize this as a method of relieving them of the necessity of providing more forces themselves."

e. Reference par. 6. Amend as follows: "At a time of delicate negotiations the use of Chinese Nationalist troops in Korea ~~would remove whatever change might remain of~~ might have prejudiced an immediate political solution of the Korean conflict deriving from those negotiations. Although it is evident that Communist China strongly supports general Soviet strategic objectives, this support might become even stronger as a result of the use of Chinese Nationalist forces in Korea. This

would not necessarily have precluded, however, a later political settlement. It was, therefore, important that a decision to use Nationalist troops be deferred until the probabilities of obtaining an acceptable immediate political solution were gone. However, Chinese Communist intervention on a massive

scale is already a fact, and an immediate political solution deriving from present negotiations now appears to have reached a point of diminishing returns.

f. Reference par. 7. Delete entire paragraph: "~~The USSR would probably welcome a unilateral . . . reactionary regime.~~"